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Preparing To Successfully Co-Teach For English Language Learners On The First Day Of School: A Series Of Professional Development Sessions

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PREPARING TO SUCCESSFULLY CO-TEACH FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL: A SERIES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS

by Carter Haaland

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To Gracie Belle, Dixie, Marge, Bernie, Cleo, Maisie, and, most importantly, Libby Lou.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Context and Rationale

"Because we have to keep our thoughts *organized*!" the student said, while making a hand motion like he was putting his books away. It was the end of May.

Nine months earlier I had just begun my first year as a first grade English Language Development teacher. It was the first week of school and we were still establishing routines. We were introducing writing folders and I proposed taking this as an opportunity to teach the vocabulary word *organized.* My co-teaching partners agreed. I wrote a student friendly definition and a script for teaching the word based on Isabel Beck's model (Mckeown, 2014). I practiced. But I had one problem. I could not come up with a hand motion to help students remember the definition. I kept wanting to convey that things were already organized. But I did not know how to do that with my hand. After school one day, I wandered into one of my co-teachers' classrooms as relayed my problem. "Why don't you just pretend you're putting books away, like this," she said, using her hands to carefully put away imaginary books. This was my first experience with the beauty of collaboration between a general education teacher and an English language development teacher, facilitated by co-teaching.

Nine months later, this same homeroom teacher asked the class, "Why do we use graphic organizers for writing?" An English Language Learner's hand shot up in the air. It was the end of May.

In 2017, I began my first year as an English Language Development (ELD) teacher. My school was in the process of transitioning from a pull out model to a co-teaching model. This meant I was greeted by general education teachers and administrators with a lot of enthusiasm for co-teaching, but very little expertise. Essentially, I was tasked with figuring out how to do it.

My co-teachers and I embraced the task with enthusiasm and optimism. We began trying all sorts of things. I had just spent the previous year teaching a Kindergarten class, so I was eager to use what I had learned, which was how to lead whole class instruction. Often, the general education teacher and I would take turns leading whole class instruction. We also tried pulling small groups. We tried parallel teaching. We tried anything and everything.

For months, it felt like we were flailing. For months, it felt like we were wasting valuable time trying to figure out how to do our jobs. It felt like we were wasting time because we did not have a guide.

Research Question and Overview

This capstone project will explore the question: *How can teachers be prepared to successfully co-teach for English Language Learners on the first day of school?* This chapter describes the experiences that led me to pursuing this question. It also discusses data that justifies the project. It then briefly describes the project and outline its goals. This chapter also defines terminology necessary for the project and finishes by looking ahead to the rest of the paper.

Time Sensitivity

In my work as an ELD teacher, I think about my job as time sensitive. For many of my students, their time in school is the only time that they engage with the English language. Most of my students come from Spanish or Somali speaking homes, so when they leave the building they switch back to speaking their native language. And this truly is an asset. I want my students to be bilingual. I actively celebrate their native languages and I encourage their families to continue the developing their students' bilingualism. But it does mean that my time with students in school is all the more crucial.

There is also an ample supply of data that reflects the time sensitivity of this work. When students are able to prove that they have sufficient English abilities to access the general education content along with their Native English speaking peers. English Language Learners across the country prove this by testing proficient on a series of exams. If a student does not test out of English language services, they are at risk of becoming a long term English language learner. A long term English language learner is a student who has been in U.S. schools for six or more years without attaining English proficiency. In 2013, it was estimated that 60% of English language learners in grades 6-12 are long term ELLs (Chao, 2013). In Minnesota, students take the WIDA ACCESS test to prove English language proficiency. Generally, as a student advances from grade to grade, their chances of exiting English language services, or, in other words, becoming proficient in English, drops significantly. In 2016, 773 ELL students in 9th grade Minnesota tested proficient on the WIDA ACCESS test and exited English language

services. This same year, only 115 ELL students in 12th grade tested proficient (*English Learner,* 2017).

According to data gathered by the Minnesota Department of Education, students who are English Language Learners are less likely to be proficient in math, reading, and science *English Learner, 2017)*. In 2016, 23.2% of ELLs met or exceeded expectations in math. This compares to 59.6% of all students. 13.4% of ELLs met or exceeded expectations in reading, compared to 60.2% of all students. 7.9% of ELLs met or exceeded expectations in science, compared to 54.2% of all students. Also according to data gathered by the MDE, students who are English Language Learners are 20% more likely to drop out of high school than their native English speaking peers (*English Learner, 2017)*.

This data shows that students who do not become proficient in English early on in their educational careers are much more likely to remain English Language Learners for much longer. Students who remain English Language Learners are much less likely to be proficient in math, science, and reading. They are also much more likely to drop out of high school.

In Minnesota, in 2016, there were 71,919 English Language Learners (*English*, 2017). That's 8.4% of the total student population. Over the course of the last five years for which we have data, from 2012 to 2016, the number of English Language Learners steadily increased at a faster rate than total enrollment (*English*, 2017). ELLs are a growing segment of our student population in Minnesota. It is imperative that we figure

out effective ways of granting them equitable access to content and opportunity. And it is imperative that we figure out how to do it right now.

Purpose

In pursuit of figuring out how to prepare teachers to successfully co-teach on the first day of school, this project will design a series of collaborative sessions in which new co-teachers get to know each other, study different models of co-teaching, discuss relevant literature, discuss examples of effective co-teaching, design their weekly schedule, and spend time planning for the first weeks of school.

When I started co-teaching, I was not set up to be successful. I spent many evenings banging my head against my desk, trying to figure out what to do. I spent many nights lying awake, trying to figure out how best to support my students. Based on conversations I have had with colleagues, my experience is not uncommon. The goal of this project is to figure out how General Education and ELD teachers can collaborate before the school year in order to be successful on day one.

Terminology

Co-teaching has been traditionally defined as "the collaboration between general and special education teachers for all of the teaching responsibilities of all the students assigned to a classroom" (Honigsfield, 2008, p. 8). More recently, this definition has grown to include all sorts of collaborative partnerships in classrooms. This capstone will specifically focus on co-teaching between the General Education teacher and the English Language Development (ELD) teacher.

ELD teacher is an abbreviation of English Language Development teacher. This position is often referred to as an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher or English as an Additional Language (EAL) teacher. This capstone project will refer to this position as the ELD teacher, who is responsible for the language development of students who have been identified as English Language Learners.

English Language Learners*,* according to 2017 Minnesota Statutes, are Kindergarten through 12th grade students who meet two specific requirements (*English Learner, 2017)*. The first of which is that the student must have a language other than English spoken in the home. The second is that the student must be determined, through valid assessment, "to lack the necessary English skills to participate fully in academic class taught in English" (*English Learner, 2017*).

Pull out support refers to an ELD program model in which the ELD teacher pulls individual students or groups of students out of the general education classroom to provide explicit language instruction.

Chapter Summary

Chapter one describes my personal experience with co-teaching. My experience was littered with stress, flooded with questions, and marred by the nagging question, "What am I doing?" This is not uncommon. Chapter one asserts that the goal of this project is to design a series of collaborative sessions that will allow new co-teachers to avoid my experience. More specifically, it will answer the question *How can teachers set themselves up to successfully co-teach from the first day of school and on?*

Overview

Chapter two will begin with a detailed history of co-teaching, dating back to the mid 20th century. It will then discuss a variety of models for co-teaching. Finally, chapter two will outline research and studies that assert what effective co-teaching looks like and what systems need to be in place in order for it to be achieved. Chapter three will feature a detailed description of this capstone project. This capstone project will serve as a guide for how teachers can start the year successfully co-teaching. The guide will outline different collaborative sessions that co-teachers can engage in to set themselves up for success. These sessions will include "get to know you" activities, literature summaries, examples of successful co-teaching, time spent planning logistics for the school year, and guided time spent planning for the first week of school. Chapter four will draw conclusions based on my research as well as anecdotal evidence from my own practice. Chapter four will also contextualize my project within the body of work described in the literature review.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this project is to address the research question: *How can teachers be prepared to successfully co-teach for English Language Learners on the first day of school?* In order to begin, this chapter will explore the history of co-teaching. This includes pertinent legislation and court rulings. It also traces the roots of co-teaching back to the mid 20th century and follow it to Special Education. This chapter also explores a variety of co-teaching designs. This chapter also explores valuable insight provided by a number of case studies. This chapter then proceeds to explore research on relationship building, communication, and professional development.

History

Thinking about the history of English language co-teaching is twofold. First, it is imperative to consider the legislative and court case history that led to all students, not just English language learners, being included in the classroom. Second, it is imperative to consider the history of co-teaching, as it did not originate as a method of teaching English language learners. Its roots date back to the mid 20th century and really begin to take hold in Special Education in the 1980s.

Legislation and rulings. In 1954, when the Supreme Court ruling of *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* emerged, a new trend in education emerged that has endured until this day (de Jong, 2011). The trend is that we need to create schools in which all students are included. Ester de Jong asserted that the case had a significant

impact on making equal educational opportunity a driving force in educational policies (de Jong, 2011). Though this ruling did not directly affect the fate of English language learners, it did set the tone for legislation that would come shortly thereafter and shape the experience of the young English language learners of today.

This sentiment of inclusion we echoed in the Equal Education Opportunity Act (EEOA) of 1974, which ensured an education without bias or discrimination for all students (de Jong, 2011). The EEOA more concretely built upon the Bilingual Education Act of 1968. The EEOA mandated that bilingual education be provided for all students deemed to have Limited English Proficiency (de Jong, 2011). Though critics of this mandate argue that bilingual education was framed as remedical, as opposed to enriching, it still set the precedent that the English language development of non-native English speaking students needed to be addressed (de Jong, 2011).

This sentiment was further supported by the Supreme Court's ruling in the case of *Lau v. Nichols of 1974.* In San Francisco, Chinese American students with limited English proficiency were placed in the mainstream classroom and expected to sink or swim (Wright, 2010). The school district claimed that they had done nothing wrong, but the court disagreed. The court declared that the school was ignoring the needs of its students (Wright, 2010). After the ruling, the U.S. Department of Civil Rights created the Lau Remedies, which were designed to specify proper approaches to educating students with limited English proficiency (Wright, 2010).

In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) changed the federal policy for educating English language learners (Wright, 2010). This policy did not make a

distinction between bilingual programs and non-bilingual programs (Wright, 2010). It asserted that students with limited English proficiency must be placed in a "language instruction education program" (Wright, 2010). A language instruction education program was defined as a program that taught English and academic content.

Team teaching. In the 1950s, educators in the United States and in other countries were intensely reflecting on their educational practices (Friend, 2010). Their effectiveness and efficiency were called into question. One response was to develop alternative models and methods. One of these models was team teaching (Friend, 2010) Team teaching began as a way to increase educational efficiency and to lean on the expertise of individual teachers. In team teaching, one teacher would lead a lecture to a large group of students. After the lecture the students would split into smaller groups, led by other teachers, for discussion, assignments, and assessment (Friend, 2010).

After awhile, team teaching morphed into a variety of different models. One later iteration of team teaching that still persists today is one teacher planning one subject for a grade level. The other teachers will then use those plans for their own classes. Another iteration is a team of high school teachers that collaborate when planning, and then teach their own classes individually (Friend, 2010). Team teaching as a concept never looked like co-teaching as we know it today, but it did begin the process of collaboration between teachers that will ultimately lead us to it.

Special education. Collaboration has always been a tenant of special education. General education teachers and special education teachers have long been communicating about how to best support students. However, this line of communication was often the

only thread connecting two separate environments. Special education students were primarily pulled from their classroom and educated elsewhere (Friend, 2010). In the 1980s this began to change. Based on the principles of inclusive education, educators began to experiment with the idea that students who receive special education services could be more effectively educated in the general education classroom through partnerships and collaboration (Friend, 2010). Here we have the birth of co-teaching as we know it today.

Since the 1980s, interest in co-teaching has grown exponentially. More recently, the advent of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 cemented the practice of co-teaching in our education system (Friend, 2010). The law requires that all students, including those with disabilities, be taught by highly qualified teachers who are held accountable to student outcomes (Friend, 2010). Shortly thereafter, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 was reauthorized (Friend, 2010). This law requires that students with disabilities be educated in the least restrictive environment (Friend, 2010). Co-teaching has been used as the most effective way for students with disabilities to be educated by highly qualified teachers in the least restrictive environment.

This long and varied history of co-teaching through special education is strongly influencing how co-teaching is being designed to more effectively educate English language learners. There are many designs that were originally constructed in the field of special education that will be included in my project.

Co-Teaching Designs

Traditionally, co-teaching has been understood as "the collaboration between general and special education teachers for all of the teaching responsibilities of all the students assigned to a classroom" (Honigsfield, 2008, p. 8). More recently, the scope of co-teaching has expanded to include a myriad of other educators, including ELD teachers. When general education teachers and ELD teachers collaborate, they have a wonderful opportunity to make learning more accessible and more effective than if they were working independent of one another. Co-teaching allows for teachers to organize the classroom in a variety of ways. This section will describe the different co-teaching designs that teachers can employ to more effectively meet the needs of all of their students.

One teach, one assist. One Teach, One Assist is comprised of one teacher leading instruction and the other teacher floating among students throughout the lesson, providing support as needed. The teacher leading instruction teaches just like they would if they were teaching the lesson on their own. The teacher assisting can move throughout the room, monitoring behavior, harvesting data, and supporting students who need more clarification to access the content (Thousand, 2006).

One Teach, One Assist can be an effective design when the general education teacher has been teaching the same curriculum for many years (Cook, 1995). If the teacher has refined the lesson over years of experience, it makes sense for them to teach the lesson in the way that has proven to be effective. In this case, the co-teacher can then float among the students and support as needed (Cook, 1995). One Teach, One Assist is

also an effective way to harvest formative data. While one teacher leads instruction, the other teacher circulate throughout and get data in a variety of ways. The co-teacher might monitor student language output by writing down verbatim responses to questions that can later be analyzed in comparison to an exemplar. The co-teacher might track mastery of a certain math skill during a game. With one teacher in charge of leading all instruction. The other teacher is free to dedicate their time and energy to harvesting data.

Another common concern with One Teach, One Assist is that the teacher that's floating can have their role devolved into one that exclusively provides behavior support (Thousand, 2006). Supportive teaching is not effective when one teacher is just putting out fires. This can also serve to stigmatize the students that are more consistently receiving attention from the teacher that is floating. It is imperative that both teachers are leveraging themselves to support students' mastery of the learning targets (Thousand, 2006).

Parallel teaching. Parallel teaching occurs when the two co-teachers both teach different groups of students in different parts of the classroom simultaneously (Thousand, 2006). When the two co-teachers meet with different groups in different parts of the classroom, the possibilities are endless. Parallel teaching is a particularly advantageous design when working with a heterogeneous population of students that encompass a wide variety of skill levels, learning styles, and cultural backgrounds (Thousand, 2006). Parallel teaching creates an environment in which options for different ways of learning are available to students. Parallel teaching is also an effective design for teachers that have starkly different styles of teaching. Instead of trying to mesh together and

potentially muddy the relationship, parallel teaching creates a space for each teacher to do what they do best. Both teachers can then collaborate to decide which students will benefit most from which style (Thousand, 2006).

Just like any co-teaching design, parallel teaching can create a number of challenges as well. One potential concern of parallel teaching is that certain students can be stigmatized within the classroom (Thousand, 2006). While a fundamental argument for co-teaching is that it reduces the stigma of students being pulled from the classroom, this stigma can still persist within this co-teaching design. If the same students are being pulled for supplementary instruction everyday or if the groups are conspicuously homogeneous, then these groups can be stigmatized within the general education classroom (Thousand, 2006). It is imperative to be intentional about the frequency with which certain students are grouped together. It is also imperative to switch up designs.

Team teaching. Team teaching occurs when both teachers share the responsibility for all components of instruction. This includes planning, teaching, assessing, and analyzing data (Cook, 1995). Both teachers assume an equitable leadership role when teaching the class. One teacher might be leading a discussion with the other teacher chiming in to provide different insights. One teacher might lead while the other teacher models taking notes (Cook, 1995). Co-teachers can design a lesson in a way that emphasizes each teacher's strengths. During a science lesson, one teacher might explain the history of a particular concept while the other teacher can focus on the mechanisms that describe how something works (Thousand, 2006). Team teaching is an opportunity

for students to benefit from the strengths of both teachers, as well as the power of two minds collaborating to create more engaging lessons (Honigsfield, 2015).

Station Teaching. Station teaching occurs when teachers divide students into groups and are responsible for different parks of instruction on a rotational basis (Cook, 1995). Independent rotations can be included in this design, as well. Oftentimes, each co-teacher is responsible for teaching the content to multiple groups. This creates a dynamic in which teachers are able to hone in instruction and improve each time. Station teaching also creates smaller groups. This has the positive effect of being easier on new teachers. It also has the positive effect of allowing both teachers to be in charge of instruction simultaneously, thus avoiding the threat of one teacher's authority being compromised. One potential drawback of station teaching is that the noise level in the room can get loud because there are so many competing voices. Another potential concern is that both teachers need to be in sync with pacing so that instruction can conclude at the same time and rotations can occur smoothly (Cook, 1995).

Alternative Teaching. Alternative teaching occurs when one teacher delivers instruction to the class while the other teacher pulls a small group and teaches different material (Cook, 1995). This model can be effective when students have exceptional learning needs. This form of instruction may include a review of previously unmastered material or a preview of vocabulary that will be need for the next day's lesson. One potential drawback of alternative teaching is that it can stigmatize the students who are participating in the small group (Cook, 1995).

Case Studies

One of the most effective ways to plan for the implementation of co-teaching is to study what other schools have done. This section describes and analyzes a number of case studies. Case studies provide a glimpse into the ways in which co-teaching can be effective, and also the ways in which co-teaching can deteriorate over time. This section spends time analyzing the student achievement data harvested by the case studies. It will also address the feedback given by teachers who participated in the case study. It will also dive into the nuanced ways that the co-teaching program was implemented. This will include scheduling, time allotted for collaboration, and professional development. By analyzing case studies, this section hopes to identify the most positive aspects of ways that co-teaching has been implemented and also identify areas that can be improved.

In 2007, Jennifer York-Barr, Gail Ghere, and Jennifer Sommerness published a case study after three years of following the implementation of an ESL co-teaching program at a Midwest urban elementary school (York-Barr, 2007). The school served about 600 students grades K to 6 (York-Barr, 2007). About 75% of the students were students of color. About 66% qualified for free or reduced lunch. About 45% were English Language Learners (York-Barr, 2007). The school was ripe for the case study because the years preceding the study scores on standardized tests had dropped (York-Barr, 2007). There was also conversations among administrators about the feeling of isolation among English Language Learners because their program model had them pulled from the classroom (York-Barr, 2007). The move to implement co-teaching as an

ESL program model was an effort to create a more inclusive and academically rigorous environment for all students.

The study sought to focus on the ways in which teachers collaborated, what instructional designs were used, how did teachers view the practice, what were the outcomes for students, and what were the implications for practice (York-Barr, 2007). Through a series of interviews with teachers that were co-teaching, researchers found that teachers generally had positive experiences with co-teaching. Teachers reported that they learned more from their colleagues. They felt like they had more flexibility with instructional time. Teachers reported that the increased amount of experience in the room resulted in greater teaching efficacy. They also felt like they had a better understanding of their students because they were able to see them in a greater variety of learning contexts (York-Barr, 2007). While many of the teachers were initially resistant to the change, by the end of year 1 most were on board with the program.

Through these teacher interviews, though reviews were mostly positive, the study also identified a number of challenges that arose with the implementation of a co-teaching program model. Teachers reported that they lost instructional autonomy. They would occasionally feel confused about roles and responsibilities. Teachers reported insecurity about teaching in front of others and to a wider variety of students. Some teachers identified different teaching philosophies as a source of tension (York-Barr, 2007). Though overall, the teachers that participated in this case study had positive reviews of their experience, they were still able to identify many challenges that need to be addressed when implementing a co-teaching ESL program model.

The case study also identified the key factors that contributed to the success of instructional collaboration. The first factor identified was pre-existing dissonance (York-Barr, 2007). Teachers were more willing to get on board with the change because they felt like their current model was unsuccessful. Another factor was the support of administration. By providing extra resources and collaboration time, administration played a huge role in the success of the program. A third factor was a combination of small group instruction and co-teaching. Many teachers reported that differentiated small group instruction that was able to take place in the general education classroom because of co-teaching was the biggest factor in their success. Another key factor was time allotted for collaborative planning. Though the amount of time was not deemed adequate, the time that was allotted was reported to be crucial. A final key factor identified in the case study was the use of different instructional models. By having many different instructional designs at their disposal, teachers were most successful when they could tailor the design to meet the needs of a certain lesson or the needs of certain students (York-Barr, 2007).

The teachers' experiences provided many valuable insights into the key factors that determine the success of implementing a co-teaching program model. They also identified many ways that the experience can be improved. However, ultimately, the question remains about student achievement. In this particular case study, student achievement showed marked improved for all students, not just English language learners (York-Barr, 2007). The second cohort of students, meaning the group of students that

were greeted by teachers who had a year of co-teaching experience, showed significant improvement in math and in reading for all three years of the study (York-Barr, 2007).

In 2007, Danling Fu studied the collaboration between an ESL teacher and a General Education teacher at a public school in lower Manhattan (Fu, 2007). At this school, newly arrive chinese immigrant children made up 20% of the student population (Fu, 2007). After a year of working together, the two teachers, along with Fu, decided to study their collaboration and its impact on literacy and writing development (Fu, 2007). They created a model which included both co-teaching a pull-out instruction, but they worked together to make sure that both models were tied together a mutually beneficial (Fu, 2007).

Both teachers reported that they benefited directly from the collaborative experience by learning from each other (Fu, 2007). One teacher had training in applied linguistics while the other had training in general literacy education. Both teachers found that there were many things that they didn't know. One teacher likened the experience to taking education courses while doing an internship. They were able to be exposed to different ideas and different methods of teaching, and then were able to implement them promptly (Fu, 2007).

In May of 2008, a graduate student at Kean University conducted a case study that sought to assess the impact of co-teaching and to evaluate the academic progress of English language learners in a co-teaching environment (Fearon, 2008). The study focused on two sets of co-teachers, one in a first grade classroom and another in a second grade classroom. The first grade classroom consisted of ten ELLs and ten native English

speakers. The second grade classroom consisted of seven ELLs and 15 native English speakers (Fearon, 2008).

In both the first grade and second grade classroom, most students advanced two reading levels in just a few months, from December/January to March (Fearon, 2008). Still, despite the growth of all students, it was noted that in the data, native English speaking students grew at a faster pace than their ELL peers (Fearon, 2008). This data point asserts that having ELLs in the general education class is not a detriment to their native speaking peers. It is also to be noted, that this was the first year of co-teaching. Thus, the fact that ELLs typically grew in reading is very encouraging.

This case study identified many benefits of co-teaching. One of these benefits is the ability to differentiate instruction (Fearon, 2008). Fearon asserts that on a practical level, differentiating instruction, while more effective, often takes more planning time and can be draining. By collaborating with a co-teaching, differentiating instruction can take less time and be more effective. Another benefit of co-teaching identified in this case study is that English language learners are included in the mainstream classroom (Fearon, 2008).

In 2016, Afra Ahmed Hersi and colleagues published a case study of the collaboration between a fifth grade teacher, and English language development teacher, and a literacy specialist. The school at which the study took place had seen its number of English language learners grow significantly over the past decade (Hersi, 2016). At the time of the study, the student population was 43% white, 36% African American, 11

Asian, 10% Latinx (Hersi, 2016). Of this student population, 12% were identified as English Language Learners and received English language services (Hersi, 2016).

The case study took place over the course of 6 months during the 2009-10 school year (Hersi, 2016). Data was collected through participant interviews, classroom teaching observations, planning meeting observations, and analysis of planning documents and lesson plans (Hersi, 2016).

The case study analyzed the logistical framework for the collaboration between the three teachers. The group of teachers would meet twice a week for 45 minutes, on Monday and Friday (Hersi, 2016). The meetings focused on developing collaborative plans for teaching comprehension strategies. One of the elements of this collaborative process that stood out was that it was part of a school improvement plan. This meant that the collaboration had broad administrative support and the expectations for all participants were clearly outlined for each member of the team. It was made clear to all staff that the expectation was that they actively participate in collaborative planning. This set the collaborators up for success by ensuring that they all began on the same page. Researchers also noted that this created a culture of accountability (Hersi, 2016). The biggest takeaway from this case study was that in order for co-teaching relationships to be successful, there needs to be clear expectations for the co-teachers, as well as consistent planning built into the schedule.

Relationships, Communication, Personality

Co-teaching has been described as a professional marriage (Friend, 2010). This apt description underscores the importance of building strong relationships. Much of the

data that's been acquired on teacher experience is anecdotal. In a case study in Minnesota, many of the teachers felt like one of the biggest challenges was getting to know the other co-teachers and building relationships (York-Barr, 2007). These same teachers also reported that another challenge was the "increased communication demands given instructional interdependence among teachers" (York-Barr, 2007, p. 318). In order for co-teaching to be successful, it is imperative that co-teachers establish strong relationships with each other and establish consistent and respectful lines of communication.

In 2017, Christopher Soto of Colby College developed a groundbreaking new way of analyzing personalities called The Big Five (Soto, 2017). Previous research surrounding personalities primarily focused on defining a person's personality giving them a label or a title. Soto's work instead acknowledges that our personalities are nuanced and multifaceted. His new framework gives your a score based on the extent to which you exhibit the five character traits: extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience (Soto, 2017).

Professional Development

The success of the implementation of a co-teaching program model is often decided by a number of factors. One of those factors that cannot be understated is the support of administration. Administration can provide support by creating a strong schedule, allocating time for collaboration, and coaching. One of the broadest ways that administration can support co-teaching is by providing professional development to all staff who co-teach (Honigsfield, 2015). This section will analyze examples of

professional development with the goal of identifying ways that professional development sessions can be most effective.

Andragogy. According to Knowles, andragogy is the practice of helping adults learn (Knowles, 1980). This is contrasted with pedagogy, which is the practice of helping children learn (Knowles, 1980). One of the four fundamental pillars on which andragogy is built is that adults' can become a self-directed learner" (Knowles, 1980). Knowles' also asserts that two of the key elements of effective adult learning is the involvement of adults in diagnosing their own needs for learning and involving them in the formulation of their learning objectives (Knowles, 1980). In co-teaching, because relationships are so important, and because teachers need to feel invested in their own learning, any professional development session needs to provide co-teachers with the space and autonomy to direct their own learning.

Knowles work has had a massive impact on our understanding of adult learning. There are several major implications. One of the most important implications is that adult learners need to have choice. This choice must be applied broadly. Adult learners learners must be invested in the reason that they are undertaking the professional development (Knowles, 1984). This means they must be involved in the process of identifying the area of learning. Then, once the topic is chosen, adult learners must have choice over the way that they learn (Knowles, 1984). So many professional development sessions are designed to have teachers sitting in a room while the leader of the session disseminates the information and prescribes all of the activities that take place. Knowles work asserts that this is ineffective. Teachers must have agency over their own learning and how to

implement that learning in a way that positively affects their day to day lives (Knowles, 1984).

Noticing. According to Donald Schon, the most important factors that allow educators to transform themselves from mediocre to truly effective are reflection and noticing (as cited in Meadows, 2018). Noticing is defined by Schon is the ability to identify crucial moments in instruction and to be able to explain why they're important (as cited in Meadows, 2018). This allows teachers to be flexible and to adapt instruction to meet the needs of students. When teachers can identify the needs of students in the moment and make changes that better meet those needs, that is when they are at their best.

Much of the research around noticing has focused on reflection (Meadows, 2018). Teachers are developed to hone their noticing skills by reflecting on lessons, talking about what went well and what could be improved. This skill is also developed through videotaping lessons, watching them, and reflecting on them (Meadows, 2018). The vast majority of this research has been focused on developing individual teachers (Meadows, 2018).

In 2018, Meadows and her colleagues published a study that sought to identify how the idea of noticing, along with the practice of video reflections, can serve to professionally develop co-teachers (Meadows, 2018). The study followed two seventh grade mathematics co-teachers' development. The study identified three distinct stages of noticing: 1.) identifying what is important in a situation; 2.) make a connection between the situation and the broader teaching principle; 3.) using prior knowledge to think

through the interactions (Meadows, 2018). This process of noticing was developed in a number of ways, including video reflections, noticing logs, and reflective journals (Meadows, 2018).

This study had two major findings. The first finding was that the teacher's beliefs about collaboration and co-teaching changed (Meadows, 2018). What was interesting though, was that the co-teachers beliefs about co-teaching did not end up aligning. For example, teachers identified different areas for improvement in their classrooms. The authors of this study interpreted these results as a need for more communication between co-teachers to promote clarity and alignment. The second consequential finding was that throughout the professional development, the number of things that teachers noticed increased. By noticing more things, teachers were able to respond to the needs of students more effectively and ultimately lead to more effective classrooms (Meadows, 2018).

This study has many implications for the professional development of co-teachers. Thinking about teaching through a noticing framework is an effective way to analyze teacher efficacy and a good lens to focus development. Using videos of teacher instruction is another effective tool to promote professional development. The most important takeaway from this study is that reflection and communication are integral to the development of a successful co-teaching partnership. Co-teachers must desire to improve and through that desire, they must reflect on their practice and being willing to make effective changes. Co-teachers must also keep open lines of communication between each other in order to grow and in order to maintain a healthy working relationship.

AAA+ framework. In 2018, Carla Lynn Tanguay and colleagues explored a professional development framework to educate teachers who are preparing to work with a group of culturally and linguistically diverse students (Tanguay, 2018). The study acknowledges the discrepancy between the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of teachers and the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students that they serve (Tanguay, 2018). This framework is particularly relevant to co-teachers who will be working with English language learners.

The framework is comprised of three components. The first component is awareness (Tanguay, 2018). The researchers define awareness as the ability to value one's own nuanced background of culture, language, and race, as well as one's own biases toward the nuanced background of others (Tanguay , 2018). Researchers found that many teachers expressed positive feelings toward multiculturalism but had a tendency to shy away from sources of tension or conflict that may arise from biases. Researchers concluded that more support and space for reflection is needed for teachers to be better equipped to effectively confront issues that may arise in multicultural settings (Tanguay, 2018).

The second component of the professional development is action (Tanguay, 2018). Researchers define action as the ability to take and articulate a stance that moves toward inclusion and diversity (Tanguay, 2018). This component focuses on teachers actions as models for change both within and outside of the classroom (Tanguay, 2018). Researchers identified that teachers need more professional development support in the

ability to effectively differentiate instruction and create an equitable learning environment (Tanguay, 2018).

The third component of the professional development framework is alignment (Tanguay, 2018). Researchers define alignment as making sure that teachers, mentor teachers, and supervisors are on the same page about their goal of preparing teachers to educate culturally and linguistically diverse students (Tanguay, 2018). Instead of having isolated development sessions, this framework advocates for a systemic and programmatic overhaul that aligns the values and goals of all parties (Tanguay, 2018).

To illustrate their vision of scale, researchers described the systematic way that an elementary teacher preparation program implemented the framework (Tanguay, 2018). The preparation program created three pillars of the program and identified specific ways that each will be addressed (Tanguay, 2018). The first pillar states its goal to develop "stakeholders' awareness of their identities, biases, and attitudes" (Tanguay, 2018). The program seeks to achieve this goal by engaging in guided conversations, book clubs, modeling how to implement relevant topics into curriculum, inviting faculty to present relevant work, and hiring faculty with relevant expertise (Tanguay, 2018). The second pillar states its goal to develop "stakeholders' pedagogical knowledge and skills to teach diverse learners (Tanguay, 2018). The program seeks to achieve this goal by inviting guest speakers to program meetings, model co-teaching across, integrate strategies to support ELLs literacy development, and infuse topics of diversity in all course (Tanguay, 2018). The third pillar states its goal to align the learning experiences of all stakeholders (Tanguay, 2018). The program seeks to achieve this goal by bringing teachers and

supervisors to campus for professional learning, modeling conversations advocating for ELLs, modeling co-teaching, providing weekly onsite consultations, modeling instruction and assessment, and facilitating schoolwide inquiry groups (Tanguay, 2018).

The work of Knowles emphasizes the importance of individual choice and investment of adult learning (Knowles, 1980). The work of Meadows emphasizes the importance of individual reflection in adult learning (Meadows, 2018). These influences have had a major influence on my project. However, the work of Tanguay has served to emphasize the importance of programmatic alignment and systemic unity (Tanguay, 2018). While these ideas may seem, on the surface, mutually exclusive. I believe that they can work together to create a series of truly effective professional development sessions.

Summary

This chapter surveyed a variety of literature in order to explore the question *How can teachers be prepared to successfully co-teach on the first day of school?* First, the chapter explored the legislative and court case history that led to school being more inclusive and ultimately mandating that all English language learners be educated effectively. The chapter proceeded to describe the history of co-teaching, from its roots in the mid 20th century to its relationship with Special Education. The chapter also described a variety of co-teaching designs and gained valuable insight from a number of case studies. The chapter concludes by exploring the importance of relationship building and different models of professional development.

CHAPTER THREE

Project Description

Introduction

This capstone project has led me to investigate the vast field of literature related to co-teaching. I have traced its roots back to the mid 20th century. I have followed its development through special education and to English language development. I digested a wide variety of co-teaching designs. I read numerous case studies and testimonials of the good and the bad from teachers that dedicated endless amounts of time to the practice of co-teaching. I identified numerous relationship building strategies. I read about theories of adult learning and professional development. All of this research has been an attempt to answer the question *How can teachers be prepared to successfully co-teach for English Language Learners on the first day of school?*

The pursuit of an answer to this research question has led me to create a series of professional development sessions that aim to ultimately prepare teachers to successfully co-teach on the first day of school. This chapter proceeds to lay out a brief overview of the project. This chapter also describes the research framework that guided the creation of the project. It then proceeds to describe the methods used during the professional development sessions and provide a rationale for these methods. This chapter describes the project's intended setting and audience. This chapter continues to provide a detailed description of the project. Finally, this chapter describes the timeline for the implementation of the project.

Overview of Project

This project seeks to prepare teachers to successfully co-teach on the first day of school. In order to do this, the project consists of five hour-long professional development sessions. The sessions attempt to distinguish themselves from other professional development programs and to be more effective because they are self-directed by the co-teachers themselves and they provide ample work time for the application of the development. Teachers begin by starting to build a strong relationship and discussing preferred communication styles. Teachers study the research that asserts that co-teaching is the most effective model for the education of English language learners. They are also exposed to a variety of co-teaching designs. Teachers have self-directed work time during which they will begin to plan for the first week of school. They sit with their own lesson plans and spend time preparing for how both teachers can most effectively leverage their expertise. Teachers then plan the logistics for the school year. They set a plan for weekly meetings scheduling consistent times and explicitly describing the preparation that each teacher is responsible for completing prior to the meeting.

Research Framework

The theoretical framework that guided the development of this project is Malcolm Knowles' work on adult education. Knowles' books *The Modern Practice of Adult Education* and *Andragogy in Action* (1980) laid the foundation on which this project was conceptualized, designed, and ultimately built. Andragogy is defined as the art and science of helping adults learn. This is distinguished from pedagogy, which is the

practice of helping children learn. Knowles' work asserted that adults are characteristically different learners than children, and thus, their education requires different methods and strategies. The andragogical model views adult learning as a process and prefers the title of "facilitator of learning" to "teacher" (Knowles, 1984). This is because the teacher is not the only source of information in the room. All adults are seen as assets that actively contribute to the experience of learning.

According to Knowles, the andragogical model consists of seven elements. The first of these elements is the climate in which the learning will take place. Knowles asks the question, "What procedures would be most likely to produce a climate that is conducive to learning?" (Knowles, 1984). The climate is broken down into two distinct parts. The first is the physical environment. Typically, for adults, a room with rows of chairs facing the front is not conducive to learning (Knowles, 1984). Therefore, it is imperative to arrange the physical space in a way that invites collaboration and promotes an equitable ownership of the space and the learning (Knowles, 1984). The other part of climate is the psychological space. Knowles asserts that a psychological climate that is conducive to learning promotes mutual respect, collaboration, mutual trust, supportiveness, authenticity, pleasure, and humanness (Knowles, 1984).

The second element of the andragogical model requires that the adults are involved in mutual planning (Knowles, 1984). Knowles asked the question, "What procedures can be used to get the participants to be involved in the planning?" (Knowles, 1984). When adult learners are involved in the planning, they will be more likely to be invested in their learning. One of the ways that adults can be involved in the planning, is

if the facilitator of learning provides options for activities and readings (Knowles, 1984). If the facilitator of learning provides options and allows adults to choose, this gives adults more agency over their own learning and involves them in the planning process.

The third element of the andragogical model requires that the adults are involved in the diagnosing of their own needs for learning (Knowles, 1984). Knowles asked the question, "What procedures can be used for helping learners responsibly and realistically identify what they need to learn?" (Knowles, 1984). A tension at many professional development sessions is when the felt needs of the participants are not congruent with the ascribed needs of the facilitators of learning. In other words, leaders have decided what adults need to learn and the adults disagree that that's what they need to learn.

The fourth element of the andragogical model requires that the adults are involved in the creation of their own learning objectives. Knowles asked the question, "What procedures can be used to help learners translate their diagnosed needs into learning objectives?" (Knowles, 1984). By collaborating when setting the goals for a session, the facilitator of learning can galvanize support from the learners and also set the tone of collaboration for the rest of the session.

The fifth element of the andragogical model requires that the adults are involved in designing their own learning plans (Knowles, 1984). Knowles asked the question, "What procedures can be used to help the learners identify resources and devise strategies for using these resources to accomplish their objectives?" (Knowles, 1984). By helping learners identify resources and devise their own strategies, learners are in control of what their learning and how they're going to do it.

The sixth element of the andragogical model requires that the facilitator of learning helps the adults carry out their learning plans (Knowles, 1984). This is the part of the model when the majority of the learning is taking place. Here, the adults have chosen a path and are in control of their own learning. The facilitator's role is now just to answer questions as they come up and get out the way.

The seventh element of the andragogical model is requires that the adults are involved in the evaluation of their own learning. Adults learners are able to evaluate the level of success with which they were able to meet or not meet their own learning objects (Knowles, 1984). Adults can also evaluate the worth of the program as a whole (Knowles, 1984). This is also a space for adult learners to provide anecdotal feedback that can serve to guide the improvement of the program in the future.

Connection to Research

This project is designed to give the co-teachers control over their own learning. The goal is for them to feel invested in their own learning because their autonomy allows them to make the experience particularly relevant and useful to their own classrooms. I have been in so many professional development sessions that provoke eye rolling from many of the teachers in the room. Oftentimes, these teachers' eyes roll because they are passive recipients of the learning. They have no control over it. They roll their eyes because they have a million things to do and this feels like a waste of time. They roll their eyes because, while the learning might be interesting, the session doesn't provide space for the teachers to figure out how to implement the learning in their own classrooms. The goal of this project is to create a series of professional development sessions that keep

teachers' eyes. It aims to do this by trimming the fat, increasing efficiency, giving teachers control over their own learning, and providing time for teachers to apply their learning in tangible ways in their own classrooms.

In accordance with the first element of the andragogical model, the setting of the professional development sessions will be decided by the participants. The co-teachers might decide they want to go to a coffee shop for the relationship building session. They might decide want to work outside at a park for the session about co-teaching research and theory. They might decide they want to work in their classroom when they're planning for the first week of school so that they can arrange the space. The goal of this autonomy is create an environment that is physically and psychologically conducive to learning (Knowles, 1984).

Following the second element of the andragogical model, throughout the sessions, adults are involved in the planning of their sessions (Knowles, 1984). Throughout the sessions, teachers will have options for different readings, different options of taking in information, and different options for recording their learning. Teachers will also be able to direct the entirety of their learning in the final session which provides space for them to prepare to co-teach for the first week. By offering choices throughout the sessions, teachers are given control over their own learning are more likely to be invested.

The third element of the andragogical model is that the adult learners are involved in the diagnosing of their own learning needs (Knowles, 1984). Toward the end of the first session, teachers are given space to reflect on their own learning needs. They are encouraged to write down questions that they have and to identify gaps in their own

understanding. These questions are referred back to at the beginning of the second session and can be used to guide their learning. Here, teachers are able to identify their own learning needs and then make decisions about how to address them.

In accordance with the fourth element of the andragogical model, at the beginning of each development session, teachers will collaborate to create their own learning objectives for the session (Knowles, 1984). For each session, teachers will be given a brief overview of what's to come and will be provided with example learning objectives for the day. Then, teachers will collaborate to write their own learning objective for the day. By involving teachers in this process, they have control over the trajectory of their learning and will be more invested in the process of accomplishing the objectives.

Following the fifth and sixth element of the andragogical model, teachers will be involved in creating their own learning plans and then have help carrying them out (Knowles, 1984). In sessions, once teachers create their own learning objectives, they will be given options for how to proceed with their own learning. The resources that are provided will help them accomplish their learning objectives and the options will allow them to be involved in the learning plan and will increase their investment.

The seventh element of the andragogical model is that the adult learners are involved in evaluating their learning (Knowles, 1984). At the end of the program, teachers will be able to rate the level of success with which they were able to accomplish their learning goals. They will also be provided space to share anecdotal experiences and suggestions for how to improve the program.

Setting and Audience

The setting for this project is a high performing, charter elementary school in South Minneapolis. The school is composed of about 350 students in grades K-4. This student body is about 92% Latinx, 6.5% Black, and 1.5% White. 95% of the students qualify for free/reduced lunch. 81% of the students are English language learners.

The audience for this project is the general education teachers and the English language development teachers that will be co-teaching together. Currently, there are four English language teachers for the five grades. One ELD teacher is exclusively dedicated to kindergarten. This teacher will be co-teaching a reading and writing block with each of the kindergarten teachers. Another ELD teacher is exclusively dedicated to first grade. This teacher will be co-teaching a reading and writing block with each of the first grade teachers. The other ELD teachers have split responsibility for second, third, and fourth grade. One ELD teacher will co-teach with second and third grade teachers. The other ELD teacher will co-teach with third and fourth grade teachers.

Project Description

This project is composed of five one-hour professional development sessions. The sessions are designed to be completed by teachers who are going to be co-teaching with each other in the upcoming year. Each session will have its own folder on google drive that will include the itinerary for the session and all of the resources that teachers will need to successfully complete the learning objectives that they create. The first session is designed to build strong relationships. The second session is designed to introduce teachers to co-teaching research and design. The third and fourth sessions are designed to

help teachers plan the logistics of the year to come. The fifth session is designed to prepare teachers for the first week of co-teaching.

Timeline

This capstone project was completed over the course of nine months. The original brainstorming and researching process was completed in the fall of 2018 over the course of 4 months. The project itself was designed and created in the spring of 2019 over the course of 4 months. Finally, the project was edited and refined over the course of one month.

Summary

This chapter describes the project that attempts to answer the question *How can teachers be prepared to successfully co-teach on the first day of school?* This chapter described the theoretical framework, Knowles' andragogical model, that guided the creation of the project. This chapter described the methods of the project and their research-based rationale. This chapter identified the intended setting and target audience of the project. This chapter provided a detailed description of the project.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusions

Introduction

From the beginning, the goal of this project has been to contribute to a more equitable education system for English language learners. Co-teaching between a general education teacher and an ESL teacher for English language learners allows them access to content in the same environment as their native English speaking peers. It also creates a dynamic in which they are exposed to the language of their native English speaking peers. Effective co-teachers are also creative with their classroom designs so that they can differentiate instruction. When a general education teacher and an English language development teacher co-teach, they have the opportunity to improve instruction for all students.

The process of researching and creating this project has sought to answer the question *How can teachers be prepared to successfully co-teach for English Language Learners on the first day of school?* This chapter reflects on the process of trying to answer this question. This reflection focuses on what I have learned as a researcher, writer, and educator. This chapter revisits the literature review by describing the most influential research and by making new connections. This chapter describes the implications of the project and how it is a benefit to the profession. Finally, this chapter concludes by describing the limitations of the project and what my plan for the future is.

Major Learnings

As I reflect on the past year of working on this project, many revelations come to mind. One of the most impactful takeaways from this year has been the importance of relationships, not only to my project, but to the profession more generally. Throughout my research, I read several case studies. These case studies often harvested anecdotal data through interviews with co-teachers. The main thing that was consistently mentioned as a factor to successful co-teaching was the importance of building a strong relationship with your co-teacher.

At a professional development session at work, we listened to a panel of high school seniors reflect on their educational experiences. This was in front of an entire auditorium full of our networks teachers. They were asked about specific classes, experiences, and teachers that had a major impact on them. As they reflected, they more consistently named the teachers that went above and beyond to build strong relationships with them and to communicate that they cared and believed in them. Very rarely was academic development mentioned as something that they look back on as impactful. The final question posed to this panel was "what do you want your teachers to know?" The unifying theme in these high schoolers' answers was that they want teachers to build strong relationships and communicate that they care.

The process of working on this project, in conjunction with my own professional experiences, has caused me to reflect on the importance of relationship building to the profession of teaching. Clearly, it is imperative to build a strong relationship with your co-teachers and your peers so that you can collaborate to effectively educate your

students. It is also clearly imperative to develop strong relationships with your students and to communicate that you believe in them. This made me reflect on the sparse amount of time I have spent developing my relationship building skills throughout graduate school and throughout my professional career. It is mentioned fairly frequently as important, but very rarely is it the focus of a class or a professional development session. Very rarely are concrete skills taught that are designed to foster more successful relationships. The vast majority of classes and professional development sessions are focused on content and classroom management. While those things are undoubtedly important, my experience designing this project has led me to believe that we need to focus more of our time and energy on relationships in the education profession.

More personally, the process of creating this project caused me to reflect on myself as an educator of adults and my ability to relinquish control. One of the theoretical centerpieces of my project is that too often professional development sessions are too prescribed. In other words, administration is just telling teachers what to do and how to spend their time. The goal of my project is to give teachers more choice and more agency over how they spend their time. Throughout the research process I came to thoroughly believe in this idea. However, when I started creating the project, I found it harder and harder to relinquish control.

After conducting so much research, I found that I had a very good idea of what I believe would be the most effective use of the sessions' times. However, by unilaterally making these decisions in my project, I would be falling into the very same trap I set out

to combat. Throughout the process of creating this project I learned that it is harder for me to relinquish control than I had originally anticipated.

Return to Literature

The process of creating the literature was incredibly long and time-consuming. The scope of research that is included in the review is vast, and that does not include the research that did not ultimately make the cut. However, there are certain parts of the literature review that had a significant impact on the development of my project. One case study that had an enormous impact was conducted by Jennifer York-Barr in 2007. In this study, York-Barr harvested anecdotal data by interview teachers. These teachers reported that one of the key factors that led to successful co-teaching was time to collaboratively plan (York-Barr, 2007). My project is designed to create time for teachers to collaboratively plan and to make this time-efficient and effective. In the third session, teachers spend their time analyzing the components of an effective co-teaching meeting. Then they design the pre-work that they will complete prior to the meeting so that their meetings can be efficient. Then they design the agenda that they will use during their meeting. Finally, they compare schedules and find a time for them to meet consistently.

In York-Barr's case study, teachers also reported that co-teaching was most effective when they were able to creatively design the classroom to differentiate instruction (York-Barr, 2007). My project is designed to equip teachers with a variety of co-teaching designs that they will then be able to implement at their discretion. The entire second session is dedicated to a study of different co-teaching designs and then an

activity in which teachers read different scenarios and decide which design will be most effective and why.

My project was also significantly impacted by the work of Malcolm Knowles (1984), specifically, his theories of andragogy. According to Knowles' andragogical model, adults should be included in the process of diagnosing their own learning needs (Knowles, 1984). My project is designed to do this in a few ways. First, throughout the professional development sessions, the teachers are offered choices. They are able to diagnose their own learning needs and decide which activity will more effectively facilitate their own learning. Second, teachers are able to design their own pre-work and meeting agendas. They are offered examples of what this could look like, but ultimately it is up to them to create the design. Finally, in the last session, teachers are given the freedom to spend the time how they think will be best.

Another component of Knowles' andragogical model asserted that adults should be involved in the creation of their own learning objectives (Knowles, 1984). When I began creating my project my original idea was for the teachers to design their own learning objectives for each session. The more I worked on it though, the harder this idea seemed to me. There were certain things that I believed the teachers had to do in order for the sessions to be effective. I compromised by designated the final session as one where the teachers can collaborate to create their own learning objective.

A new discovery that I made throughout the process of creating the project is the Big Five Inventory. As I have mentioned throughout this paper, the development of strong relationships is something that has been top of mind throughout the creation of this

project. In order to do this, I designed the first session to focus exclusively on relationship building. I wanted part of this session to focus on the analysis of personality traits and to spark a discussion about how the two co-teachers are compatible and how they are potentially incompatible. This idea led me to find the Big Five Inventory. The Big Five is unique because it does not give you a succinct label (Soto, 2017). Rather, it gives you a score based on the extent to which you exhibit five main personality traits: extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience (Soto, 2017). The assertion is that everyone has different elements to their personality and the question is not what can you be labeled, but rather the extent to which your exhibit the big five (Soto, 2017). I am excited about this element in the first session as an opportunity for the co-teachers to learn more about each other and themselves.

Benefit to the Profession and Implications

I believe that my project is most beneficial to the profession because of the uniqueness of its design and the control that it gives teachers over their own learning. Based on my experience in education, the vast majority of professional development sessions have been designed by administrators to address a learning need that they have prescribed for their staff. Extremely rarely are teachers involved in the diagnosing of their own learning needs. My project benefits the profession because it is designed for teachers to be involved in the process of diagnosing their own learning needs. My hope is that this will influence other professional development sessions related to other topics.

My project is also a benefit to the profession because it gives teachers choice over how they meet their learning needs. Based on my experience, nearly every professional

development session has an itinerary that is handed out to teachers without their input. My project diverges from this trend by offering teachers choices over how they will spend their time. My hope is that this dynamic will also be included in other professional development sessions related to other topics.

The work of Malcolm Knowles asserts that by involving teachers in the process of diagnosing their own learning needs and in the process of how to meet their learning needs, facilitators of adult learning can increase investment (Knowles, 1984). By increasing investment, facilitators can more effectively create a psychological environment that is conducive to risk-taking and growth (Knowles, 1984). My hope is that, by including these elements in my projects' design, it will have an influence on other professional development sessions.

Another way that my project benefits the profession is that it asserts the efficacy of co-teaching as a program model for English language learners. Many schools still have an English language development program model that exclusively relies on small pull-out groups. My project benefits the profession by sharing research and case studies that will pass on the knowledge that co-teaching is an incredibly effective program model for English language learners. My hope is that this project will spread this knowledge and that more administrators will be eager to implement in their schools.

Limitations

One of the limitations of my project is that it takes place over a short period of time. This is necessary because planning time prior to the start of the school year is scarce and it is imperative that co-teachers are prepared for the first day. This dynamic

makes my project unable to fully achieve one of its goals, the goal to have the co-teachers build strong relationships. The project definitely lays a solid foundation for a strong relationship, but relationships take a long time to develop and they require consistent care and attention. It would be impossible for my project to facilitate the development of a true, strong relationship over the course of just one week.

Another limitation of my project is that it takes place exclusively between the two co-teachers. I believe that this dynamic is important because it allows the two co-teachers to get ready for the specifics of their first week of instruction and for the specifics of their schedules and co-teaching meetings. However, this dynamic limits potential collaboration with other teachers who are embarking on the same co-teaching journey.

Future

One goal I have for the near future is for my charter school network to adopt my series of professional development session as a means to prepare teachers to successfully co-teach on the first day of school. My content expert is my campus' ELD coordinator. She has been involved in the creation of the project since the beginning so it will help that she has a nuanced understanding of it. I hope to start with the implementation of the series at my campus and then for it to spread to the other schools in the network.

Another goal I have is to continue to develop sessions that can be implemented throughout the year. The goal of my project is to prepare co-teachers for the first week, but even after this goal is accomplished there is still a lot of work to do. I hope to develop sessions that address the limitations mentioned in the previous section. The sessions will create more opportunity for collaboration to see what other teachers are doing to have

success. The sessions will also continue to work on building strong relationships between co-teachers.

Finally, another goal I have is to continue working to become a better co-teacher in my own classroom. I have worked incredibly hard over the past two years to become an extremely effective co-teacher. I believe that I have learned a lot and that I am doing many truly effective things. However, I am aware that I still have a lot to learn. My goal is to continue to work hard to grow even more as an educator.

Summary

This chapter reflects on the process of answering the research question *How can teachers be prepared to successfully co-teach for English Language Learners on the first day of school?* This chapter describes my biggest takeaways from the process of conducting the research, writing the paper, and creating the project. This chapter also reflects on the most impactful studies from the literature review and makes connections to new research. This chapter addressed the benefits to the profession and the potential implications of the project. This chapter also addresses the limitations of the project. Finally, this chapter concludes by discussing my future plans.

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